DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 255 968 CS 504 910

AUTHOR Galvin, Kathleen M.
TITLE Workshops on Family Communication.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Urbana, Ill.; Speech Communication Association, Annandale, Va.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 85
CONTRACT 400-83-0025
NOTE 49p.; TRIP: Theory & Research into Practice.
AVAILABLE FROM Speech Communcation Association, 5105 Backlick Rd., Building E, Annandale, VA 22003 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication (Thought Transfer); Enrichment Activities; *Family Counseling; *Interpersonal Communication; Interpersonal Competence; Marital Satisfaction; Marriage Counseling; Postsecondary Education; *Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Family Communication; Marriage Encounter; Marriage Enrichment; *Marriage Enrichment Programs

ABSTRACT

Intended to help speech communication professionals become involved in developing, implementing, and evaluating marital or family enrichment programs, this booklet discusses the theory and practice of using marital enrichment programs to increase family harmony. The first section contains an overview of selected enrichment programs, as well as discussion on program effectiveness, communication-related skills, and program leadership. The second section (1) focuses on planning strategies, gaining exposure, creating instructional designs, planning for evaluation/feedback, and the mechanics of the workshop; and (2) includes relational exercises, and sample workshop schedules. The booklet concludes by focusing on the unique opportunities available for speech communication professionals through directing marriage and family enrichment programs. (EL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED255968

THEORY & RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

Workshops on Family Communication

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Kathleen M. Galvin

CS 504 910

Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills
1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801

Speech Communication Association
5105 Backlick Road, Building E, Annandale, Virginia 22003

Workshops on Family Communication

Kathleen M. Galvin
Northwestern University

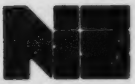
4

Speech Communication Association Publications Board: Gustav Friedrich, Chairperson, University of Oklahoma; Robert Scott, University of Minnesota; Linda Putnam, Purdue University; William Work, Speech Communication Association, *ex officio*.

Speech Communication Module, ERIC/RCS: William Work, Module Director; Don M. Boileau, Associate Director; Penny Demo, Assistant Director.

Outside Reviewer: Stephanie Shaefer, George Mason University.

Published 1985 by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801 and the Speech Communication Association, 5105 Backlick Road, Annandale, Virginia 22003. Printed in the United States of America.



This publication was prepared with funding from the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. 400-83-0025. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Prior to publication, the manuscript was submitted to the Publications Board of the Speech Communication Association for critical review and determination of professional competence. This publication has met such standards. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of either the Speech Communication Association or the National Institute of Education.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 85-051020

Contents

Foreword	vi
Theory and Research	1
Overview of Selected Enrichment Programs	2
Program Effectiveness	8
Communication-Related Skills	10
Program Leadership	14
Practice	16
Planning Strategies	16
Gaining Exposure	17
The Mechanics of the Workshop	17
Creating Instructional Designs	19
Planning for Evaluation/Feedback	20
Relational Exercises	21
Workshop Schedules	32
Conclusion	38
Bibliography	39

Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system developed by the U.S. Office of Education and now sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE). ERIC provides ready access to descriptions of exemplary programs, research and development reports, and related information useful in developing effective educational programs.

Through its network of specialized centers or clearinghouses, each of which is responsible for a particular educational area, ERIC acquires, evaluates, abstracts, and indexes current information and lists that information in its reference publications.

The ERIC system has already made available — through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service — a considerable body of data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of educational research are to be used by teachers, much of the data must be translated into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports easily accessible, NIE has directed the ERIC clearinghouses to commission authorities in various fields to write information analysis papers.

As with all federal educational information efforts, ERIC has as a primary goal bridging the gap between educational theory and classroom practice. One method of achieving that goal is the development by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) of a series of booklets designed to meet concrete educational needs. Each booklet provides teachers with a review of the best educational theory and research on a limited topic, followed by descriptions of classroom activities that will assist teachers in putting that theory into practice.

The idea is not unique. Several educational journals and many commercial textbooks offer similar aids. The ERIC/RCS booklets are, however, noteworthy in their sharp focus on educational needs and their pairing of sound academic theory with tested classroom practice. And they have been developed in response to the increasing number of requests from teachers to provide this kind of service.

Topics for these booklets are recommended by the ERIC/RCS National Advisory Board. Suggestions for topics are welcomed by the Board and should be directed to the Clearinghouse.

Charles Suhor
Director, ERIC/RCS

Theory and Research

Educational institutions and executive training programs are the usual centers for communication education and communication skills training. Yet each week thousands of couples and families throughout the United States participate in some type of marital or family-enrichment program containing a communication component or focusing exclusively on communication theory and skills. During these sessions, family members (1) learn more about theories of relationships, (2) improve their interpersonal skills, and (3) share their deep feelings with each other in a structured setting. If the program is sponsored by a religious organization, they may also examine their relationships with God.

The majority of these structured experiences occur in a church, school, or community sponsored context and involve several families or couples simultaneously. These programs usually are designed for education and enrichment rather than therapy, since generally only families or couples who think they have a good working relationship attend.

Since most programs attempt to develop greater intimacy among family members, participants are expected to engage in controlled, risk-taking communication either within their own family or in a small, mixed group. Many programs also stress conflict management skills as a means of increasing intimacy.

Because the enrichment programs include theory and practice opportunities, most programs' leaders function, in part, as communication teachers presenting theories of interpersonal relationships, modeling specific communication skills, and monitoring skill development in the group. Communication serves as the cornerstone of intimacy development in most programs.

There is a need and opportunity for speech-communication professionals to become involved in developing, implementing, and evaluating such programs. Most programs are taught by nonprofessionals with training in only the specific enrichment program. Communication professionals in the academic community are needed to bring their knowledge and skills to this unique educational setting.

Overview of Selected Enrichment Programs

In order to understand the opportunities for speech communication professionals, one must examine the enrichment movement and particularly some representative national programs.

Background

Communication training for married couples and families began in the 1960s as part of the marriage enrichment movement emerging from the human potential movement and the Christian family movement. The academic work on interpersonal relationships and group processes in the 1950s gave rise to the human potential movement with its focus on growth and health. In describing the secular roots of enrichment, Herbert Otto attributes its growth to the criticism of the medical "illness" model and to the acceptance of a well-family or strengths-oriented perspective (1979). He maintains that the human potential movement and the encounter and small group movement have been at the forefront of the American marriage enrichment movement contributing to its philosophy, process, and program design (Otto 1976, 12). The concern with humanistic psychology and human potential, so characteristic of the 1960s, created the climate for marital and family enrichment.

The religious roots of enrichment are American and Spanish. They include the work of academic persons such as David and Vera Mace who began leading enrichment groups associated with the Society of Friends in the early 1960s and Herbert Otto who began experimental programs in 1961 (Hof and Miller 1981, 6). The Christian family movement contributed to the development of the Marriage Encounter Weekend which has evolved into the largest of the various marriage enrichment programs. The first Marriage Encounter, under the leadership of Father Gabriel Calvo, was held in Spain in 1962. The Marriage Encounter movement reached the United States in 1967, took root and flourished. Today there are Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish Marriage Encounter programs in most major cities.

The explosion in such programs did not occur until the 1970s. In 1973 the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) was founded by the Maces and its leadership training counterpart, the Council of Affiliated Marriage Enrichment Organizations (CAMEO) was formed in 1975. Today numerous nationally known programs exist. Some of the programs included in this category are, Marriage Encounter (Bosco 1973; Genovese 1975), Marriage Communication Labs (Smith and Smith 1976), Relationship Enhancement Programs (Guerney 1977), Couples Communication Program (Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman 1976), and Marriage Enrichment (Clarke 1972). Other programs are local in scope, in terms of organization, leadership training, and location. Small groups or individuals present

programs tailored for a specific audience or focused on a particular topic. In 1981 Hof and Miller identified over fifty programs reflecting the range of national, regional, and local approaches. The majority of these enrichment programs have a religious orientation.

Although certain goals of the secular and religious programs are similar, there are several differences particularly in terms of goals and purposes. Garland suggests:

> The helping professions offer marriage enrichment services that are designed to enhance people's ability to communicate and derive satisfaction from their marriages. These services strive for effects that can be described in terms of the skills couples learn and the happiness they report in their marriages. The church's approach to marriage enrichment is also concerned with these objectives, but places much greater emphasis on influencing people's attitudes by, for example, instilling hope in couples that they can attain their relationship goals, strengthening their belief in the validity of the institution of marriage, and eventually influencing societal institutions and values through these couples (1983, 4).

Although there may be differences in terms of particular objectives, the secular and church-related approaches to marriage enrichment reflect greater similarities than differences. It is clear that the current movement is alive and well. There are many variations on the theme, but they represent important and viable options for future participants.

Program Design

Although their long range goals are similar and there are areas of agreement regarding acceptable participants, enrichment programs differ in terms of philosophy, format, and content. Participants are likely to have very different experiences and to learn very different skills and information depending on the program they attend.

Most marital enrichment programs reflect a belief in the intentional companionship marriage. Hof and Miller define this as:

> . . . a relationship in which there is a strong commitment to an enduring marital dyad in which each person experiences increasing fulfillment and satisfaction. There is a strong emphasis on developing effective interpersonal relationships and on establishing and maintaining an open communication system. There is the ability to give and accept affection in an unconditional way, to accept the full range of feeling toward each other, to appreciate common interests and differences and accept and affirm each other's uniqueness, and to see each other as having equal status in the relationship (1981, 10).

In short, the intentional companionship marriage involves growth, intimacy, and conscious work. There is a mutuality of power and flexibility of roles.

Most programs espouse educational and preventive purposes. Programs follow predictable teaching patterns which include information, skills, and exercises. The leaders function in instructional rather than therapeutic capacities. In addition, most programs are designed to prevent problems rather than to correct them. Programs reflect one of three possible levels of prevention. They are primary prevention, which takes a health and skills approach; secondary prevention, which focuses on early diagnosis and early prevention; and tertiary prevention, where there is a focus on limiting serious dysfunction and promoting rehabilitation (Hof and Miller 1981, 11-12). Most programs fall into the primary prevention category. Potential participants who sense they are in dysfunctional relationships are encouraged to seek professional help rather than an educational experience through an enrichment program.

Program Philosophy

Although most programs have similar goals their approaches may vary widely. In her discussion of the educational foundations of marriage enrichment services, Garland suggests that four major approaches to such enrichment services are based on (1) general systems theory, (2) Carl Rogers's client-centered theory, (3) behavioral learning theories and (4) the religious philosophy of church-related programs (1983, 17-42).

The central thrust of the general systems theory is the development of patterns of coping with, and relating to, changing input from within the marital system and from the environment. By conceptualizing the marital relationship as a system, the spouse's roles are defined as processes requiring adaptation and change in both the individual and the system. She concludes her analysis by stating:

> . . . programs developed from General Systems theory emphasize teaching skills that couples can use as tools to develop awareness of their interactional patterns and to modify those patterns to cope with changes in one another and in their environment. These skills may include self-awareness communication and other-awareness, negotiation, and problem solving (1983, 23).

Carl Rogers's client-centered therapy serves as the basis for those marriage enrichment programs that are based on the belief that individual potential will be released in a relationship in which the helping person communicates caring, sensitive, nonjudgmental understanding. There is a stress placed on developing helping relationships based on genuineness,

congruence, empathy, unpossessive caring, and confirmation. In her summary of this approach Garland concludes:

> Thus to communicate effectively with one another spouses must avoid being judgmental; the expressed thought and feelings of one partner must be understood and felt from the other's point of view so that the other's frame of reference can be achieved (1983, 27).

Behavioral theory emphasizes the basic principles of learning, positive and negative reinforcement, conditioning, and shaping. Behaviorists are likely to emphasize communication and negotiation skills so couples can learn to change their behavior patterns themselves. Thus there is a focus on defining, initiating, and maintaining behaviors which result in marital happiness for a particular pair. Such programs may teach couples to contract for reciprocal behavioral changes and teach both spouses reciprocal reinforcement strategies. Sample communication behaviors may include positive message exchange, behavioral specificity (descriptiveness), giving feedback, and problem solving.

Garland perceives the church-related programs as reflective of a combination of the previous three approaches within an overall philosophy that moves beyond challenging participants to grow. Rather the religious enrichment programs also relate to the societal level attempting to influence families, communities, and human kind in general. Whereas the nonreligious programs tend to emphasize skills, the church-oriented programs emphasize marital satisfaction and the motivation to improve the marital relationships.

In addition to these four major approaches, other programs reflect the philosophies of transactional analysis, Gestalt therapy, and conflict theories. Yet almost all programs aim to change participants' skills and attitudes through an educational experience involving communication theory and training.

Selected National Programs

The following descriptions serve as an orientation to some well-known programs (Galvin and Brommel 1982, 284-285).

The Marriage Enrichment Program

The Marriage Enrichment Program developed by psychologist Carl Clarke is a weekend small-group experience conducted by a leader who works with four couples through a highly structured format. After having been prepared by leader-modeling, reflecting, and role-playing, each couple engages in a series of interactions within the small group framework. Couples prepare for this through guided rehearsal sessions with nonspouses. Group members

also give feedback to each couple. Some of the weekend experiences are sharing the qualities admired in one's spouse, sharing the behaviors that make one feel loved when performed by the spouse, and discussing wished-for behaviors from the spouse. This format directs the focus to intimacy. The actual sharing and discussion behavior is constantly monitored and corrected by the team leader who is trying to teach communication skills. The small group is a powerful support system in which to try new behaviors.

The Marriage Encounter

The Marriage Encounter, designed by Rev. Gabriel Calvo is a weekend program conducted by three couples and a religious leader. The format follows a simple pattern. Each person "gives" his or her spouse the encounter, with the team members merely providing the information and modeling to facilitate each couple's private dialogue. Through a series of nine talks, team members reveal intimate, personal information as a way of encouraging participants to do the same when alone. After each talk, the couples separate and write individual responses to the issues raised in that talk. Specific questions may be provided by the leader or the individual may write his or her feelings about the topic. The couple then comes together privately to talk using each other's written responses as a departure point. The process of Marriage Encounter involves exposition, reflection, encounter, and mutual understanding. Dialogue topics include understanding the self, relationship to partner, the couple's relationship to God, their children, and the world. Although the program began within the Catholic Church, the past years have witnessed the growth of Jewish and Protestant Marriage Encounters.

The Marriage Communication Lab

The Marriage Communication Lab of the United Methodist Church consists of a couple-led, small-group, weekend experience. The lab experience includes sessions on group building and sharing expectations, communication skills, conflict management, sexuality, trust and values, roles, expectations, and goal setting. Couples perform most of the work within the small group framework using a "do/reflect/draw conclusions" learning pattern (Hopkins and Hopkins 1976, 229). Time may be taken during the weekend to allow a couple to work through a real issue, one they actually are dealing with, in front of the other couples, in order to receive feedback.

The Couples Communication Program

The Couples Communication Program designed by university professors Sherod Miller, Elam Nunnally, and Daniel Wackman involves a small group experience for five to seven couples meeting one night a week for four

consecutive weeks with an instructor. The "couples" may be spouses, friends, or work teams. This program serves as an educational experience in which couples identify, practice, and experiment with communication skills around topics of their choice. Each couple receives feedback on their skills from the leader and the other couples. No attempt is made to deal with the content of an interaction; the focus remains solely on skills accomplishment. Practice sessions are held with nonpartners but the final demonstration of skills occurs with one's partner.

The Family Weekend Experience

The Family Weekend Experience sponsored under the auspices of the Worldwide Marriage Encounter is a weekend experience for approximately twenty families with school-age children. Parents and children spend their waking weekend hours in a local facility engaged in activities, listening to short talks, seeing films, and holding family discussions. Families are encouraged to examine their everyday lives, to discuss nine "blocks" to a family relationship such as fighting, criticism, and indifference and the means to overcoming such blocks, including listening, acceptance, and respect. Members experience personal reconciliation with each other and plan ways to maintain the feelings of closeness they achieved on the weekend.

These programs have been attended by a wide range of participants and they represent a cross section of the content and methods found in many national, regional, and local programs throughout the United States.

Continuing Education

After the initial intense experience of participating in one of these programs and learning communication skills, most people find a need for continued support in maintaining the behaviors, or eventually they tend to revert to previous patterns. A weekend or an evening of skill development does not ensure incorporation of such skills into everyday life.

To counter these problems and to reinforce the newly learned skills, some programs have instituted a variety of follow-up activities. The Marriage Encounter movement supports a variety of events including different types of weekend experiences; the Anniversary Weekend marks the passage of a year and the Retorno Weekend provides time for a couple's encounter with God. Most regions sponsor dialogue nights or sharing nights that adhere to the encounter "write/reflect/dialogue" format. Some communities have ongoing couples groups which meet on a regular basis using the Encounter format to structure the evenings. At the simplest level, all Marriage Enrichment literature and programs advocate the continuation of the "10 and 10"

dialogue pattern on a daily basis (writing for ten minutes and dialoguing for ten minutes), encouraging each couple to hold private dialogues with each other to maintain the deeper level of relationship reached on the weekend.

The Marriage Enrichment program sponsors a couple of formal follow-up evenings, which highlight issues not stressed strongly on the weekend. For example, an evening might be devoted to conflict management. These evenings serve a singular function and do not continue as an ongoing program. Again, some couples form continuing support groups that meet regularly for religious and/or personal growth. Most programs have limited opportunities or no opportunities for continuing education in theory and skills.

Program Effectiveness

Although these programs may sound effective, it is important to sound a note of caution. Attempting to teach communication principles and skills will be difficult unless there is a shared desire, or motivation, on all members' parts to change their current system. Unless couples share a mutual commitment, to review and potentially to change their interaction patterns, the results may be contrary to the desired outcomes. The reluctant participants may be won over by the experience and become a support to their spouses or other family members. On the other hand, the reluctant participant may keep the rest of the system from experiencing fully the depth of the workshop experience. Commitment to try the skills must be combined with a motivation to change if long range program effectiveness is to occur.

In addition to the issue of individual motivation, the research on current programs is limited and the research that exists does not attribute clear success to these programs. Hof and Miller contend that this scarcity in research is due, in part, to the difficulty of evaluating the effectiveness of marital enrichment programs. For example, researchers must ensure that the treatments are precisely specified, that changes are not due to the characteristics of the particular leaders involved, and that factors such as passage of time and placebo effects are adequately controlled. The biggest concern from their point of view, however, is the problem of selecting appropriate outcome measures of change.

Gurman and Kniskern (1977) summarized twenty-nine studies that purported to examine the impact of marriage enrichment programs. Although positive results were found in a majority of the measures, most studies used self-report measures and administered the questionnaires or interviews immediately after the program. Thus, few real changes in behavior or long-range effect could be documented.

The most frequently studied programs are the Marriage Encounter and the Couple Communication Program. In their admittedly critical appraisal of the Marriage Encounter, Doherty, McCabe, and Ryder (1978) suggest

the program could create illusions through emotional "highs," deny the importance of differences between people, lead to a kind of ritual dependency and guilt if the couple does not engage in the follow-up, and cause other possible difficulties. Yet these authors recognize the strengths of such a program. Doherty and Lester raised similar concerns in 1982. They reported on a ten-year retrospective study of 129 couples who had participated in Marriage Encounter. They found that 19 percent reported more frustration than before the session because of unmet needs, 15 percent reported conflict over Marriage Encounter itself, and 9 percent reported greater discomfort in sharing feelings with their spouses.

In a recent synthesis of nineteen research studies on the Couple Communication Program, Wampler (1982) found that Couple Communication appears to produce immediate positive changes in communication behavior and relationship satisfaction.

She concluded that Couple Communication has been successful in achieving its primary objective of increasing each couple's communication ability. The impact of Couple Communication on self and other as a secondary awareness objective cannot be measured through the existing studies.

Another qualitative study of Marriage Encounter couples, Ellis reported that people talked more freely about their feelings to spouses and even to other persons. Former participants were able to express negative feelings more constructively. Yet some couples reported that although they were emotionally expressive during the weekend, they could not sustain this later (1982, 205-206).

After examining a range of programs, Wackman concludes that the programs are "at least moderately successful in fulfilling their specific goals of teaching certain skills and principles" (1978, 6). He raises a series of unresolved issues regarding the larger impact of the programs on long-term change and their carry-over into other areas of family life. Specifically, he raises the following questions about the effectiveness of marital programs:

1. Do the programs result in changes in communication which last for a reasonable period of time? And if so, do the changes in communication skills result in positive changes in the relationships so that marriages are truly enriched?
2. Do the marriage programs result in changes which generalize to other relationships, particularly relationships with children, thereby enriching family life?
3. What are the major factors in these programs which create the impacts that occur — specific skills taught, format (groups vs. individual couple), degree of structure, pacing of the program (weekend or weekly meetings), leader characteristics and behavior, of a complex combination of factors? (1978, 6-7).

There is a growing body of literature devoted to examining the effectiveness of enrichment programs. Garland suggests the most useful approach for the practitioner is the pretest-posttest design with planned follow-up evaluation (1983, 216). It is clear that enrichment provides a fertile area for continued research and program evaluation.

Communication-Related Skills

Every type of program recognizes to some extent the human need for intimacy. Larry Feldman, a psychiatrist specializing in marital interaction, provides a framework for understanding marital intimacy. He suggests that marital intimacy is characterized by: (1) a close, familiar, and usually affectionate or loving personal relationship; (2) detailed and deep knowledge and understanding arising from close personal connection or family experience; (3) sexual relations (1979, 70). With the exception of sexual relations, this definition may be applied to all family relationships.

Every existing enrichment program stresses the importance of intimacy and most stress communication skills related to intimacy development. An examination of existing marital enrichment approaches reveals that most programs focus directly on the development of a loving, personal relationship and deep knowledge and understanding of the partner. Few give direct detailed attention to the area of sexual relations. The issue of sexuality may surface as content from specific couples, but few if any programs devote sessions exclusively to sexual intimacy.

What does emerge from examining programs is the almost universal focus on four communication skills as means to developing intimacy. These are self-disclosure, empathy, owning feelings, and descriptiveness. The attention to each of these skills will be examined briefly to demonstrate the consistent focus on intimacy related communication skills and the unique ways these skills are taught.

Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure refers to one person voluntarily telling another personal things which the other person is unlikely to discover from other sources, for the purpose of developing the relationship. Most programs emphasize mutual self-disclosure in their written materials, presentational content, and instructional exercises.

In Marriage Encounter, leaders actively model self-disclosure through the weekend while participants are expected to privately answer questions such as the following:

"What is my main failing as a husband (wife)?"
"What are my reasons for wanting to go on living with you?"
"I definitely need your help in . . ."
"Am I satisfied with our sexual relations?"
"What does God expect of us at this period in our lives?"
"What do we think of each one of our children?"
(Garcia 1969, 33)

During the Marriage Encounter weekend, couples complete sentences such as "I am saying 'I love you' when . . ." or "I wish you would/would not . . ."

The Couples Communication first session is devoted to self-disclosure. The opening reading states, "Self-disclosure skills let people know what is going on inside you at any given point in time" (Wackman 1976, 15). These self-disclosure skills include speaking for self and making sense, and using interpretive, feeling, intention, and action statements. The "Sharing Seats" session of the marriage Enrichment Weekend requires direct risk-taking and self-disclosure.

During enrichment workshops self-disclosure occurs in two ways. It happens as a result of structured exercises requiring a deep level of private sharing on the part of the couples involved. It also occurs as a happy by-product of the private time spent together without outside practical interference, i.e., telephones, children, and so forth. Participants often comment, "We haven't talked like this since we were dating." or "I never knew he [or she] really wanted to know such things." The deep level of structured and unstructured conversations appears to be one of the most important aspects of these workshops.

Empathy

Empathy is a person's capacity to identify the emotions communicated by another person. It also involves intensified listening skills and increased awareness of the impact of one's behavior on another.

Within the Marriage Encounter program, leaders give the following directions that emphasize the need to take another's perspective.

> I want the listening marriage partner to be very aware of what you are feeling, how you are reacting as you listen because when your partner is finished, I will ask you to tell him what you were feeling as he described his hopes.
>
> Let's go around the group and each of you describe the feelings you've been experiencing as you listened to _____ and _____. Share any feelings you had for them . . . Speak directly to them . . . (Clarke 1972, 30, 61).

In the Couple Communication program, empathy development is demonstrated through the emphasis on accurately hearing a partner's disclosure of self-awareness, specifically through "checking out" skills and reflective listening. Checking-out skills emphasize the use of probing questions while reflective listening concentrates on restatement techniques.

Marriage Encounter provides guidelines for dialogue, such as "Listen with your heart, not just with your head," which support empathic communication. The whole dialogical approach necessitates empathic listeners. Three kinds of dialogue are modeled and discussed, each involving a greater sense of empathy. The three levels are (1) acceptance, or "I accept what you are saying"; (2) experiencing with the heart, or "I almost share your feeling"; and (3) unity, or "I feel your feeling at this time with the same intensity" (Galvin 1978, 19). Participants in the Family Encounter Weekend learn to use listening to remove the "block" of indifference.

Most family members hunger for understanding. In exercises using reflective listening or role reversals, they struggle to understand one another and to make themselves understood. Leaders frequently remark at the number of people unfamiliar with reflective listening and who view this emphasis as the most valuable part of the workshop experience.

Owning Feelings

Owning feelings refers to the way in which a person makes it clear that he or she takes responsibility for, and has a commitment to, relating on a feeling level. Recognizing one's own feelings is part of being on a feeling level.

The Marriage Enrichment Leader's Manual includes the following directions for participants: "When you are talking about your own feelings and thoughts, use the first person pronouns 'I,' 'my,' and 'me,' rather than 'you,' 'it,' or 'one.' " These are called "I" messages. In the opening group experience, the leader models feeling statements and asks the group members to follow that lead. Participants are then asked to respond with feeling statements to comments made by their spouses. When one does not fully state, "I feel loved [or respected] when you . . ." the leader is asked to say, "Remember to present each behavior to your partner with the phrase, 'I feel . . . when you . . .' " Even the group feedback sessions are structured so that participants must use the sentence stem, "I am feeling . . ." Throughout the weekend, the leader is directed to quietly remind people to "let yourself be aware of how you are feeling . . ." or to be directive in requiring "I feel" statements. Leaders are warned to be on the look-out for subtle changes, such as, "I feel she loves me because she . . ." or "I feel he respects me when . . ." which do not have a "feelings of being" orientation (Clarke 1972, 23, 84).

Within the Couple Communication structure, owning feelings and thoughts is presented as part of "speaking for self" under self-disclosure. This skill is looked upon as a prerequisite to all other skills, and the characteristics of language — "I," "me," "mine" — are explored. In presenting this concept, the Couple Communication program stresses the importance of taking responsibility for one's statements. Recognition of feelings is critical to the success of a person going through the program.

The Marriage Encounter program places great importance on expressing feelings instead of only thoughts. Owning feelings is often stressed in the opening talk when the importance of sharing feelings is discussed. Many leaders will suggest that "I" messages are important to the expression of feelings, and the guidelines for dialogue state, "Express your feelings, not thoughts or ideas," and "Own the feeling — don't blame the other for your feelings." Marriage Encounter participants are provided with a list of over one hundred feeling words to aid in their understanding of the concept. All programs stress recognizing feelings and most give attention to the "I" message technique.

Many participants have great difficulty using feeling words. Leaders may ask repeatedly for rephrasing in order to elicit a feeling statement. Many people come with self-perceptions that they express in words such as, "It's just not me," "I can't talk like that," or "I don't like to get emotional." Many participants are more resistant to this skill than to some of the others because it appears to affect their self-image in a threatening way.

Descriptiveness

Descriptiveness refers to the specificity of expression in a person's feedback. Its measure encourages people to stop labeling and to start detailing behaviors.

Through sentence completion exercises, the participants in Marriage Enrichment are introduced to the importance of descriptiveness. Given a sentence stem such as "I feel loved and appreciated when you . . ." or "I feel respected when you . . ." each person is encouraged to look at his or her partner and to complete the sentences with a number of behaviorally descriptive statements. For example, "I feel respected when you ask for my opinion on investing the money we are saving," or "I feel loved when you kiss me when you come in the door at night."

The specificity of the descriptiveness can be demonstrated by the directions in the leader's manual. If a leader hears a practice session in which a person is being too general, the leader is to say, "be more specific in pointing out the behavior of your partner, when it is and what it is he/she does, in response to which you feel loved and appreciated, etc. Give examples of his/her behavior. Cite instances from the recent past" (Clarke 1972, 30).

During the first session of Couple Communication, there is a strong emphasis on detail and descriptiveness, particularly within the section on making "sense" statements. This requires documenting or accurately describing the way people make use of sense data in their comments. A statement such as, "I notice you're leaning back in your chair, not smiling" would be considered a sense statement.

During the Family Weekend Experience participants are asked to request forgiveness in very specific terms and to be descriptive as they create a fresh start "new" family. As a skill, descriptiveness tends to be nonthreatening to participants who appear both surprised by, and appreciative of, its effect.

Each of these skills serves as a vehicle to enhance the development of intimacy for marriage partners or family members. People must make a commitment to take the risk of choosing these strategies in highly charged moments. If so, they are likely to be rewarded with a growing sense of intimacy in their marriage.

Program Leadership

Most enrichment program leaders are nonprofessionals or paraprofessionals who work as individuals or couples in a voluntary, long-term service to a particular program. The five common leadership models are the following: (1) nonprofessionally trained married couples working along trained for the particular program model they are leading, (2) married couples at least one of which is a trained professional and both of whom are trained for a particular program, (3) nonprofessionally trained married couples working together with a trained professional in a particular program, (4) male-female leadership team (not necessarily married) working together in a particular program, and (5) an individual person trained in a particular model (Hof and Miller 1981, 34). In addition there are individuals or couples who are professionally trained designing and implementing their own programs on a local or regional basis.

The most formal standards for couple leadership have been developed by the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment. Their standards include the following:

> 1) the couple are actively committed to marital growth; 2) the couple can work together cooperatively as a team; 3) the couple can communicate in a warm and caring manner to other couples, and are sensitive to others in the group; 4) they are ready and able to openly share themselves and to be vulnerable; 5) they are aware of the group process and couple process occurring around them; and 6) they have basic knowledge of human development, marital interaction, and group process (Hof and Miller 1981, 36).

Garland maintains that the enrichment leader needs to be engaged in teaching participants "interpersonal skills that will enable skill learning and relationship building to occur in them" (1983, 14). Since these are responsibilities that demand more than average training, professionals should be leading groups with members who are experiencing difficulties; professionals should be consulting with the paraprofessionals who lead groups; and professionals should be developing new formats, learning activities, and materials for various family types.

Because of the specialized educational backgrounds of speech-communication professionals, they have the potential to contribute significantly to the continued growth of the enrichment movement — a movement which provides a unique opportunity for professionals to apply their skills as instructional designers and communication teachers for the benefit of many couples and families. Such opportunities should not be overlooked.

Practice

What are the realistic possibilities of functioning as an enrichment leader with a communication perspective? If you do not join an ongoing structured enrichment program, how do you go about designing a workshop, recruiting participants, and actually running the sessions? The following pages will attempt to deal with these issues in terms of planning strategies, instructional activities, and sample program formats. A typical day-long workshop will include short lectures, demonstrations by leaders and volunteer participants, question-answer discussions, small group work, and small unit (couple, family) work. Because of the educational nature of these programs, the threat level for participants should be minimal. Thus the sharing at the group level remains relatively superficial although some participants may choose to raise highly personal issues for leader/group feedback. Leaders usually model more extensive risk-taking self-disclosure with the expectation that participants will attempt to talk at these levels during private meetings.

Planning Strategies

Workshop leaders need to (1) promote successful programs, (2) create appropriate instructional designs, and (3) create appropriate evaluation/feedback materials. A well-conceived and well-executed package should result in both leader and participant satisfaction.

Building Successful Programs

A primary ingredient in getting a workshop off the ground is trust. Many people are suspicious of the personal and/or therapeutic nature of such ventures. It is particularly difficult to convince couples or families to attend if the leaders are an unknown quantity, even if their educational qualifications are good.

It takes effective self-marketing to build a good reputation as a communication enrichment leader. The following opportunities will provide exposure, and the workshop suggestions will prevent some common mishaps.

Gaining Exposure

Civic Organization Presentations

Civic organizations are always looking for dynamic speakers, and the area of marriage and family communication has good audience appeal. You can demonstrate your competence and meet a range of community members who may invite you to speak before other groups or to run a workshop for their organization. Some potential audiences are the Junior League, the American Association of University Women, the Rotary Club, and the local Women's Club.

Magazine or Journal Articles

Writing a guest column for the local newspaper or publishing an article in a church magazine establishes your credentials and may arouse the interest of a reader to follow up on your ideas. Editors of school newsletters are often pleased to have guest columns on family-related topics.

Adult or Continuing Education Courses

Many high schools or community colleges run noncredit short courses on topics of interest to the community. You may teach a one-day or six-week session and find that many students will invite you to give other presentations or to run a weekend workshop.

Church-Related Education Hours

Many churches have adult education hours before or after services and speakers are frequently needed. A well-designed, one-page vita sent to the persons in charge of these classes should result in a number of opportunities to speak.

One of the most successful ways for churches to plan toward such workshops has been to engage potential leaders for a series of talks either at a Sunday adult-education hour or for an evening session. The exposure serves to allay people's fears of spending a weekend in group therapy.

The Mechanics of the Workshop

Provide an overview of the entire program early in the workshop.

Reemphasize the educational, not therapeutic, nature of the workshop.

Use some initial exercises to let the participants get to know each other and you better, and to reduce the anxiety of the group.

Provide enough time for participant groups (couples, families) to talk alone and process the issues most important to them.

Engage in at least the same level of self-disclosure as you expect from the participants.

Provide visual stimulation during the sessions.

Vary the pacing, especially with family groups.

Provide recreational breaks.

Bring the necessary pens, paper, or art supplies.

Check out facilities and A-V equipment early and arrange furniture to complement the atmosphere you wish to create and the teaching strategies you will use.

Work out arrangements ahead of time to integrate the congregation's religious leader into the program, if this is a church sponsored group.

Have handouts or materials that review the workshop concepts available for each participant. Provide a basic bibliography of accessible readings.

Have readings or stories to begin and end programs or sections of programs.

Provide religious material to supplement and support the content if appropriate.

Be accessible between some sessions for discussions with individuals or couples.

Distribute evaluation or feedback sheet and use the comments on them to modify the design of the next program.

Be flexible. Family members may need to arrive late or leave early. Small children will create distractions.

Prepare a list of therapeutic referral sources for participants who wish a more individualized, therapeutic experience.

Break in new team leaders (paraprofessionals) on short (few hours) workshops before working together for a weekend.

Work with leaders in order to design a program that meets the needs of the particular group.

Know your limits. Do not attempt to be a therapist unless you have adequate professional training.

Attend other workshops to gain new motivation, ideas, and resources.

Be sure whoever is coordinating the practical aspects of a family weekend has made adequate child-care arrangements for the time you will meet with only adults or adults and older children.

Creating Instructional Designs

The specific content should be tailored to the sophistication and background of the specific group and to the goals or needs described by the religious or civic leaders requesting the workshop if it is not sponsored directly by you. You will need to know if this is the first workshop of its kind sponsored by the organization. You will need to know the general level of education of the community, the number of participants who may have had previous enrichment experience, and the attitudes of people toward this experience. If the group reflects a specific religious tradition, this orientation needs to be taken into account. These factors will influence the content you will attempt to cover.

Most marital workshops are intense experiences as couples spend much of their time, in and out of the formal sessions, focused on their marriage. Things are different in the case of family workshops. Usually children beyond the toddler age spend some time during each session involved in the program. At a certain point, however, small children may be asked to leave so as to permit more in-depth conversation among parents and older children. There may even be an evening session for parents and teenagers or for adults only. Because there may be single-parent families as well as two-parent families involved in such workshops, the sessions must be planned to incorporate all family and parent types. Exclusive couple exercises are not appropriate.

Early in the workshop, participants should be made aware of the leader's philosophy — the beliefs and biases about marriage or families. For example, the following types of statements may be expressed:

There is no single right way to be a couple or family.

Each marriage or family functions as a system.

Marriages or families are constantly changing.

Improving relationships requires work and risk.

Communication is a major tool for developing intimacy in relationships.

Many workshops, especially the introductory ones, cover basic communication concepts, the family as a system, and an examination of intimacy and conflict. Specific, detailed content outlines may be found in a later section. When working with returning groups, leaders often briefly review the content of the previous workshop and then move into the specific focus, such as family stress, family changes, or dual career issues.

Successful leaders pay careful attention to the group-building process or developing a sense of community among the participants. Because leaders do not know the entire group and many participants do not know each other, much of the success of the experience rests on the initial group-building efforts. Usually during the early session or sessions time is spent sharing names and other relevant "safe" information. For example, at the couples' workshop, each participant may give his or her name and complete the sentence: "One thing I find special about my spouse is_____." or "A special happy memory in our marriage was_____." Or after a short consultation period, one member of the family may introduce the whole family and briefly describe a family tradition such as a holiday activity, patterns for a birthday celebration, or a vacation activity. These low-threat activities contribute to a sense of the group. Such activities promote the building of long-term communication bonds, a secondary goal of many sponsoring organizations. Most workshops longer than three hours provide for a shared meal, recreation, and workshop times designated to further a sense of community.

On certain weekends, the religious leader present may participate as a member of the working team, leading religious services and relating certain concepts to the participants' relationship to God. The integration of this person into the leadership team is vital to the functioning of the workshop.

Successful workshops reflect a variety of learning situations. Mini-lectures may be interspersed with large-group discussion, couple or family discussion, leader demonstrations, and instructional exercises. Participants have a great deal to teach each other, and a sensitive leader facilitates this peer-instruction process.

Planning for Evaluation/Feedback

In order to become increasingly effective in meeting the needs of participants, effective leaders solicit evaluative feedback from their group members in informal and formal ways. The built-in free time and shared meals provide an excellent opportunity to hear reactions to the ongoing process of the workshop. Yet formal feedback provides the necessary opportunity to receive

feedback from all members and to hear the positive and negative comments that may not have been raised in the informal discussions. Some sample evaluation approaches follow:

Form I

1. From this session (series) I learned:
2. I found the *CONTENT*:
3. I found the *FORMAT*:
4. Other comments or suggestions for future courses, seminars.

Form II

1. Please comment on the workshop's success or failure to facilitate your own *self understanding* of your family-of-origin and your current family/community relationships.
2. Please comment on the leaders as presenters: their style, sensitivities, quality.
3. Please comment on the physical facilities: location, room, etc.
4. Please comment on the value of the workshop as a whole. Should it be repeated in the future?
5. Additional comments?

Form III

1. To what extent did this workshop match your expectations?
2. What parts of the workshop worked well for you?
3. What suggestions for improvement would you make?

These evaluations should be collected at the end of the workshop since most people will not remember to mail them back. Over time this feedback will allow you to improve the quality of your programs.

Relational Exercises

The following exercises are examples of the types of activities the leader might adapt to a particular workshop. Exercises need to be selected carefully to contribute to the specific educational focus of the workshop.

Opening Feeling Statements

Encouraging group members to share their feelings at the beginning of a workshop may set the tone for discussing feelings throughout the workshop.

In many weekend workshops, participants arrive hassled and tired as well as excited or apprehensive. The opening session provides an opportunity to release some feelings. This sharing will pay dividends through the first few hours. Usually it is less threatening if the leader starts.

> I am feeling exhausted from working all day and rushing to get here, but I feel excited about getting to meet each of you.
>
> I am feeling delighted to see some old faces from last year and looking forward to getting started.

Anonymous Expectations

Many people in a weekend program are quite anxious about what to expect. This opening exercise lets them hear some other's expectations, serving to allay fears and build community. Give each person a small sheet of paper containing the following sentences and room for response.

> I hope the following will happen in this experience.
>
> I hope the following won't happen in this experience.

The leader should collect these in a box, read them aloud, and lead the group in a short discussion of hopes, concerns, and possible norms that will make people comfortable. Leaders should openly state their hopes, concerns, and expectations.

Opening Spouse-Description Statements

At workshops when the leader does not know the group or when members may not know each other, an opening exercise in which each partner introduces self and spouse and describes one *single* behavior that makes the other person special can be helpful in learning names and establishing a climate for sharing. Leaders should model by going first. Sample statements may sound like the following:

> I'm Jane and this is Sam and one special thing Sam does is to go visit my parents with me each Sunday.
>
> I'm Sam and this is Jane and one special thing Jane does is to let me have an evening a week to play on the local basketball team without complaining that I'm not home on Tuesday nights.

Couples' Anonymous "Where Are We Now?"

It is sometimes comforting for couples to know that others may have similar concerns or fears about their relationships. Yet this information should be shared anonymously, at least early in the workshop. Hand participants

papers containing the following, with room for response, and ask them to complete the sentences and to put their answers in the box provided.

1. I think communication in our marriage could be improved if I would learn to, or be willing to
2. I think communication in our marriage would be improved if my spouse would learn to, or be willing to
3. I think we currently experience effective communication because we

Family/Couple Tradition

As a way of demonstrating a sense of closeness or cohesion, ask each couple or family to share a special tradition that is important to them. Sample comments may include:

> On birthdays, the birthday person gets to pick the menu, and we all have to eat it.
>
> On Christmas Eve we have a family dinner, sing carols, and each person gets to open one present.
>
> Every summer we go to a cabin in the mountains and do lots of hiking.
>
> Every Saturday morning Dad cooks a big breakfast including his special omelets.
>
> We always go to Sandy's home basketball games as a family.
>
> All our gifts for birthdays, Valentine's Day, and anniversaries are placed under a plant in the living room known as the "birthday tree."

The Transactional System

After discussing the interdependency of family systems, ask participants to provide five to eight characteristics about themselves in descriptive form. You may wish to suggest that they pick some categories such as religion, interests, work, money, children, or personal habits. For example:

> I love to play music and listen to it.
>
> I am relatively messy.
>
> I have great patience when working with children.
>
> I love to travel.
>
> I like to know where my money goes.

Ask each couple to combine three to four descriptions from their lists to create a sense of their combined positions. For example:

> We both love music and go to concerts often.
>
> Mark likes a neat house, and Joan can live in a messier one.
>
> Joan loves to travel while Mark enjoys spending vacations in one place, so we travel to a place and stay put.

This begins to help couples discover how they function as a system. Ask couples to share one or two integrated descriptions with the larger group.

Family System Building

Ask for two volunteers, one male and one female. Tell them (1) they have to sit on the floor in a position that would be comfortable for a long period of time, and (2) they have to be touching each other in some way. After they are settled, ask how comfortable they are and allow them to resettle if you sense one is uncomfortable. Ask a third person to join the pair with the stipulation that by the time he or she is settled, all three must be comfortable and touching each other. After you have established that the three persons could hold these positions for a long period, add another individual to the group, giving that person similar directions. Finally, add a fifth person. By this point, you should have five persons who have reworked themselves so that each person is comfortable and touching everyone else. Let them hold the pose for a while and ask the other group members to make a mental picture of the group and start a discussion about the group.

Eventually, ask one specific person to leave the group. You may wish to choose the third person added, or you may wish to remove a person who is intricately physically involved in the formation. Carefully watch what the remaining four persons do after the individual has left. You may wish to have another person leave also. Then discuss what happened. In processing this exercise, you may wish to emphasize issues such as: (1) the effect of adding new members to a system, (2) the adjustments of the original couple during the growth process of the system, (3) the adaptive capacity of the system as members leave, (4) the communication that is possible between members in terms of touch and eye contact at different points in the building and separating process, and (5) the critical change points, for instance the addition of the fourth person.

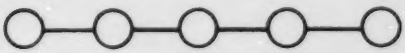
Relate this group formation to the formation of the relationships among family members. Explain how everyone is affected by the addition, removal, or handicap of a family member.

Family Network Pressures

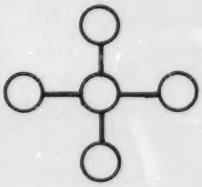
Ask for four to six participants from a cross-section of families and set up a new family system, for instance one with a blind member or one with a single parent. Give each person in the exercise two four- or five-foot lengths of rope. Tell each member to make rope connections to the two persons to whom he or she is most attached. Then instruct the members to communicate only through tugs on the ropes. Have the members compete to send messages to certain figures or try to reach persons with whom they are not directly tied. Discuss the pressures of being attached, the feelings of being unattached, the networks through which certain messages are sent.

Family Network Models

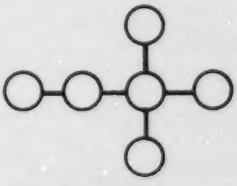
The following exercise using a deck of cards can be used to demonstrate the flow of messages through simple communication networks. Ask for five volunteers to sit in five chairs lined up across the front of the room in close proximity to each other. After the persons are seated deal each one five cards. Then tell them they are to "decide what you would like to hold in your hands and negotiate for the cards you want. The only ground rule is that you may *only* talk to the person sitting next to you." If people ask whether they are playing any special card game or if they can do certain things, gently repeat the original directions as their only guides. You and the observers watch the process until you can see how the communication network is developing and until all the members have been involved to some degree. Then ask them to stop. At this point you may ask for five new volunteers or continue with the original ones. Ask these people to sit so that four persons face one person in the middle. This is the switchboard configuration. (If you wish you could place one chair behind another in order to make the arrange-



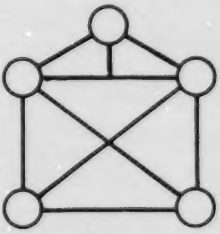
Chain



Switchboard



Switchboard
(more complexed)



Completely
Connected

ment more complex.) Tell these participants that their directions are the same: "Decide what you would like in your hands and negotiate for it. The only ground rule this time is that you may only talk to the person in the middle." (If they are arranged in the more complex switchboard, the end person may talk through the middle person.) Let this continue until the process is revealed and all persons have had some opportunity to become involved. Finally with the same people or new volunteers, have them pull their chairs in a circle and tell them to follow the same directions, but this time "Everyone may talk to everyone." Let this continue for a few minutes. Discussions afterward may focus on (1) access to all members, (2) efficiency or the necessity of certain models, (3) applications to various family types (e.g., stepfamilies), and (4) how family roles, e.g., that of the mother, are usually played out in the networks.

Communication Rules around Sexuality

Have participants break into small groups of five to eight persons and discuss how they learned about sexuality in their "families-of-origin" (the families they grew up in) and/or how they handle discussions of sexuality now. Sample shorter questions may include the following:

1. What words were used in your family for the private parts of the body when you were a child? How did you learn where "babies come from?"
2. What are some specific communication rules in your family-of-origin that relate to sexual issues?
3. How are issues of sexuality discussed in your family now?
4. How would you or did you raise your children in terms of information and attitudes regarding their sexuality?

Reflective Listening

Have leaders or a volunteer couple demonstrate destructive and constructive conflict around the same issue. Ask them to simulate an argument two separate times on an issue about which they hold differing points of view. During the first argument, tell them to use several destructive strategies such as namecalling, labeling, interrupting, and yelling. During the second round, give them the following directions: "After the first person (A) has stated his or her ideas, the other person (B) must restate to A's satisfaction A's position before B can move on to his or her points. Then after B has made his points, A must restate to B's satisfaction his or her points before A can take another stand." Thus, participants are encouraged to paraphrase, summarize, and empathize with the other person's feelings and really understand the other's

position before moving on to their own positions. Often, the reflective comments will be prefaced by phrases such as "You're saying that . . . " or "You feel . . . ." Ask the group to break into groups of two couples (couple A and couple B). Spread the couples out into quiet spaces. Ask couple A to pick a relatively nonthreatening area of conflict and to discuss the issue while couple B serves as moderators. Then have the couples reverse their roles.

Strategies for Sharing Affection

After discussing relational currencies or ways of sharing affection, have each couple or family work alone as a small group. Give each person a sheet of paper and say, "I want you to list three or four ways your partner or other family members make you feel loved." After this part is completed, say, "Now on the other side I want you to list two or three ways that you would like the other people in your family to express their love to you." After everyone is finished, ask the family members to share their lists with each other. Each person should answer as follows:

1. Do I agree that that is how I express affection to you?
2. How possible is it for me to use the other currencies?

Family-of-Origin Sharing

After time is spent discussing family-of-origin influences (e.g., language, nonverbals, traditions, rules, currencies) have partners tell one another their family-of-origin experiences around one or two of these issues and how that background affected their expectations or attitudes in a marriage.

Ask a group of four to six volunteers, each representing a different family, to sit in a circle in the front. Give them family labels (e.g., mother, stepfather) and tell them they are to discuss a topic (e.g., plan a vacation for next summer, decide how to save $1,000 before next income tax period, plan a big Thanksgiving party for lots of relatives).

When they have formulated a problem, assign each person one of the following roles: placater, blamer, super-reasonable member, irrelevant comment maker. Ask the group members to begin to solve the problem in their roles. After a period of time, you may reassign the roles so that each individual experiences playing different behaviors or you may remove certain roles (e.g., placater, and reassign that person something else).

After they are finished, ask observers to determine the effect of the different roles on themselves and others in the group. They should discover the transactional nature of communication or how one person's communication influences another.

Role Behaviors:

Placater — Tries to please everyone and keep others happy. Insists on receiving blame for all that goes wrong; gives time, money, and effort to right wrongs; believes that if you are deserving you will receive things without asking for them; typical verbal pattern: "I'm sorry," "I do try," "Excuse me," "It's my fault," "It will be all right," "Don't be upset."

Blamer — Takes credit for all that goes right; finds fault with everything; puts responsibility for problems on others; typical verbal pattern: "You never do . . ." "Why don't you ever . . ." "You always . . ." "Remember when you . . ." "I get so tired of always having to . . ."

Super-reasonable Member — Uses pronouns sparsely, relies on "one," "it"; outlines possibilities; uses the longest words possible; uses as many details as possible; always proper and controlled; typical verbal pattern: "Now if we just think this out . . ." "It seems reasonable to assume . . ." "Now think about it this way . . ."

Irrelevant Comment Maker — Never stays on the verbal point; constantly interjects with non sequiturs; physically and mentally seems to be constantly moving; typical verbal pattern: anything that is not directly on the subject of the conversation. For example, asking "What's for supper?" during a serious conversation or interjecting "You should see John's new car," when the family is talking about vacation plans.

High Pot-Low Pot

In her book *Peoplemaking*, family therapist Virginia Satir describes the large cast iron pot that sat on her porch at the family farm in Wisconsin (1972, 20-21). Depending on the time of year the pot held stew, soap, or manure. Whenever anyone wanted to use the pot there were two important questions to ask, "What is the pot now full of?" and "How full is it?" Satir says that as her clients talked about their self worth she thought of the pot. Eventually she shared this image with her clients, and people began to talk about their individual "pots." For example, "I feel low pot" would mean someone was feeling worthless, sad, or depressed. "I feel high pot" would mean someone was excited, full of energy, or secure. These images lend themselves well to conversations among family members.

Give each person a Chinese rice box (a small carton with a metal handle) and ask each person to draw symbols for himself that represent when he or she is feeling "low pot" or "high pot." Family members may share their pots' symbols with each other and answer the following questions. "Wha

are times when I feel high pot?" "What are times when I feel low pot?"

Participants may be asked to bring their pots to the final session or closing religious service when the leaders will fill the pots with dirt and plant beans that will sprout in a few weeks. Thus the pots serve as a symbol of individual life and growth.

Disconfirming Triads

The leader may work with a demonstration group of three persons or may suggest that everyone in the group break into groups of three (triads) and assign the letters A, B, and C to each of the group members. The leader will then ask A and B to hold a conversation with each other for about two minutes. During these two minutes they are to do their best to exclude C from the conversation. The leader then tells C that he or she should try very hard to enter that conversation. After the two minutes are up, the leader should switch the assignment so A and C talk while B tries to get in, and then after another two minutes, C and B talk while A tries to get in.

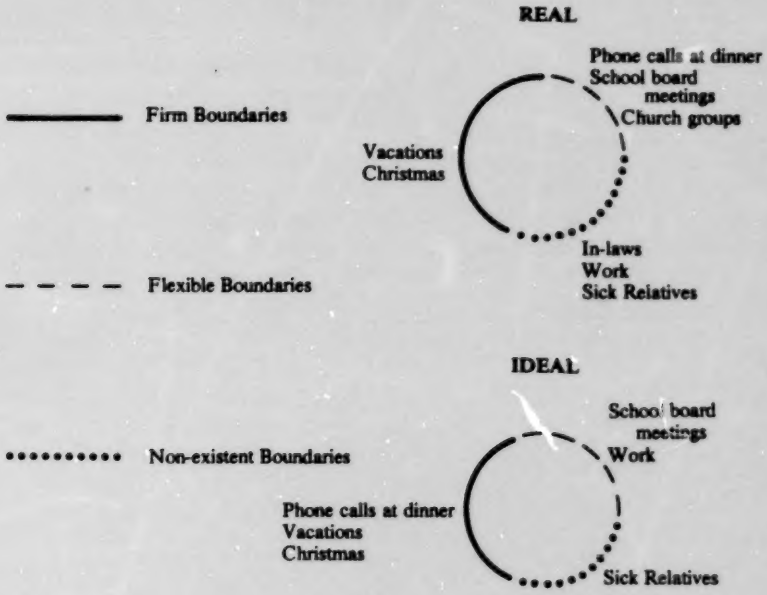
After the experience the leader should initiate a discussion about how people felt when they are left out or disconfirmed and how people tried to force themselves into the conversations. As a result of these answers the leader should move the discussion to how spouses and family members disconfirm each other and how people try to get attention in families. Some participant comments may include: "I feel disconfirmed when I try to talk to Ben and he just keeps looking at the television." "I feel disconfirmed when we are at a dinner party and everyone is talking about something I don't understand and Lilla never even tries to explain it or include me." "I feel disconfirmed when I try to tell my mother something and she says 'uh huh, uh huh' but I know she's not paying any attention."

Real vs. Ideal Boundaries

Most couples or families have difficulty finding quality time for themselves in the midst of hectic work and home responsibilities. Many workshop participants report that they never have time alone as a couple. As a trigger to discussing the way they wish their world to function, couples or family members are given worksheets containing boundary models and asked to identify their real and ideal boundaries. The leaders may model this first on the board.

The model sheet should contain two circles with varying circumference lines representing firm, flexible, and nonexistent boundaries as in the illustration. Outside the "real" circle, participants should list the outside pressures with which they deal through firm, flexible, or nonexistent boundaries. Then they should create their "ideal" world and indicate the kind of boun-

daries they wish to have around their marital or family relationship. For example:



Couples who believe they need more time should talk among themselves about how to protect their relationships and what realistic steps they could take to establish their "ideal" boundaries.

Gift Card Exchange

As a way of continuing the spirit of the workshop, family members may be encouraged to give gift cards to one another during the final session of the workshop. Each participant should fill out a gift card for every other member of the family describing some loving act that will be performed after the family gets home. Sample statements might include the following:

I will read you three bedtime stories during the next two weeks.

I will go with you to two football games this month.

I will give you breakfast in bed.

The leader needs to provide the gift cards, usually dittoed papers such as figure 1.

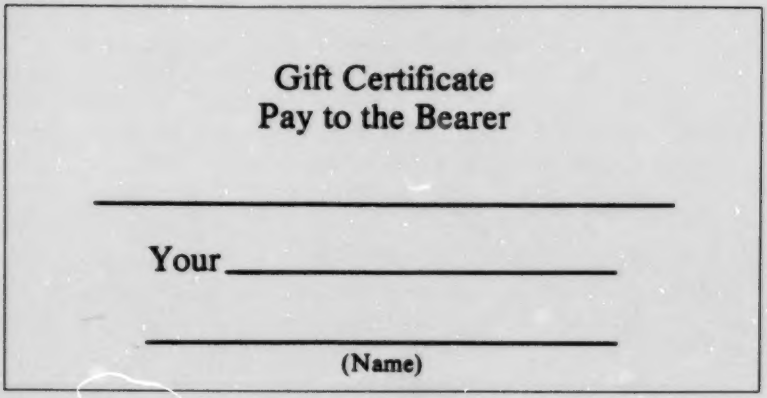


Figure 1.

The card could even reflect a particular aspect of communication such as fair fighting. Participants would be asked to write behaviors they would wish to exhibit when they returned home, such as "I will look at you when we get into an important discussion." "I will try not to use my usual red-flag words." These cards might look like figure 2.

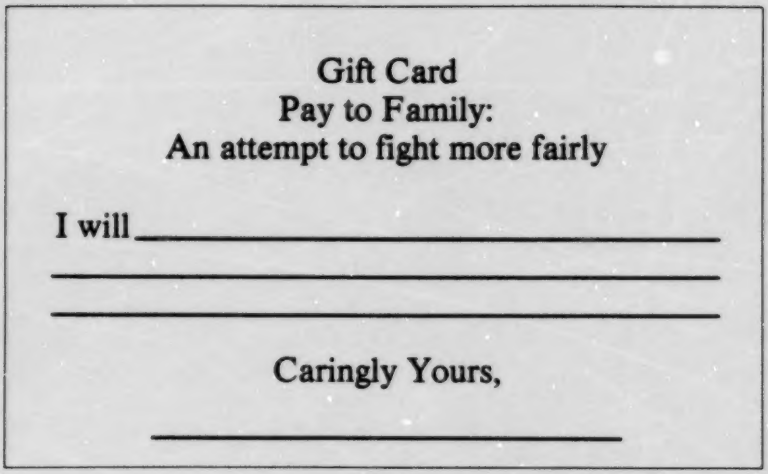


Figure 2.

Love Letter Exchange

Near the end of a marriage workshop, spouses may be encouraged to write love letters to one another emphasizing the positive aspects of their relationship and reaffirming their commitment. The leader needs to (1) provide one page of paper and an envelope, (2) collect all the letters, and (3) mail them a few days after the workshop is completed.

Mud on the Wall Wrap-up

At the end of the final session, the leader may help the group reach closure by reminding the group of memorable moments during the workshop. The leader might introduce the review thus: "If you throw a handful of mud against a wall, very shortly some of it will dry up and flake off. This will continue over time until most of the spot has flaked away and only a small dab of mud is left on the wall. As you attend sessions like these, you may get a great deal of information and experience a multitude of feelings. But just like the mud on the wall, after you get home, some of this information will be forgotten and experiences will fade until finally there will be only a few memories that remain of this workshop. What I would like you to do for a few minutes is think about the two or three things that you imagine will still remain in your mind or heart after much of the workshop experience has faded. Then would you share one of those things with the group." The leader should limit people to one or two comments and contribute his or her own "mud" to the discussion.

Workshop Schedules

Family Communication Weekend

Friday Evening 8:00-9:00 (Whole Families)

Getting Acquainted

Question 1. If you were to move to a new house what is the first thing you would try to unpack to make you feel like you were *home*? (Each member answers individually after one member introduces the family.)

Question 2. What are one or two family traditions that are special to your family (e.g., birthday tree, coming downstairs with presents, or birthday meals)?

Orientation to facility, rules, etc.

Saturday Morning 9:30-11:00 (Age 5 and over for the first half-hour)

Introduction to "pot" — high and low self-esteem (Virginia Satir pot description)

Draw on their pots
(1) family symbol agreed on by all
(2) one self symbol
(3) initials on side

Tell each other one time you are likely to feel either highpot or low pot.

Definition of five family types

Family as system (Satir system building exercise)

Communication: (1) horizontal/vertical, (2) functional/nurturing, and (3) verbal/nonverbal

Question: What were unique verbal or nonverbal messages you experienced in your family-of-origin?

Family-of-origin

Family themes (e.g., share with spouse (and children) some themes from your family-of-origin)

Saturday Afternoon 1:30-2:00 (Ages 5 and over for the first half-hour)

Each family discusses how its members got their full names and shares selected ones with group.

Patterns: (1) functions and (2) examples

Networks (network card game exercise)

Rules (e.g., adults and kids join with others in small group. Adults discuss communication rules in their families-of-origin.)

Currencies

Closing Reading

Saturday Evening 6:30-8:30 (Adolescents and adults)

Psychological/physical intimacy

Question: What is one way you know you are loved in your family? (couples/families talk and answer randomly)

Intimacy and relationship development (Feldman's criteria for marital intimacy) (Altman and Taylor levels of relationship development)

Self-disclosure: (1) Philosophy and (2) Characteristics

Linear and curvilinear models (role reversal exercise)

Sexuality: (1) monological/dialogical, (2) talking about sex, and (3) conflict-displacement

Confirmation

Question: What are others' behaviors that make you feel you are not there? (1) disconfirmation, (2) rejection, and (3) confirmation

Closing Reading

Sunday Morning 9:30-11:00 (Age 5 and over for the first half-hour)

Coat of arms exercise (all family members contribute to drawing and share one item with group)

Question: What is one thing we fight about that we could fight about more constructively? (for all families to discuss privately)

Conflict: (1) inevitable philosophy, (2) patterns (Raush, Kramer), (3) overt-covert distinction, (4) covert, and (5) fair fighting techniques

Reflective listening exercise

Good families (Howard's characteristics)

"Mud on the Wall"

Religious Service (Liturgy)

Exercise 1: Have each child pick up a package of beans to be planted and to represent new life in their pots.
Exercise 2: Fill out gift card for each family member, tell them about it and put card in their boxes.

Marital Overnight Workshop

Friday Evening 7:30-9:30

Question 1: How are you feeling right now?
Question 2: What is one single behavior that makes your spouse special to you?

Disarming orientation: (1) positive experience, (2) quality-check and (3) talk to selves — privacy

Communication: (1) verbal vs. nonverbal, (2) functional vs. nurturing, (3) listening vs. recognition, and (4) horizontal vs. vertical

System-orientation to couple/family

Family-of-origin concept

Meanings and perception

Fun — frost heaves-define
who lives here-visual

Serious

What I need from you is more *respect.*

I believe we need a greater sense of *trust* in our relationship.

I really need to feel *appreciated* by you.

How do we read each other's messages?

Currencies (relational meassages or ways of sharing affection)

Intimate currencies

verbal reinforcement
self-disclosure
listening
affect
touch
sex
aggression

Economic currencies

money
gifts
time
favors
service
access

Exercise: Take ten to fifteen minutes and share with your spouse (1) how you knew you were loved in your family-of-origin, and (2) the ways you were expected to show love. Try to relate this to how you show love as an adult.

Closing: *The Precious Present* reading

Saturday Morning 9:30-11:45

Share one tradition (couple or family) that is special to you.

Stages of relationship: (1) orientation, (2) exploratory affective exchange, (3) affective exchange, and (4) stable exchange

Disintegration process

Define marital intimacy: (1) deep, detailed knowledge and under-

standing; (2) loving, close, personal, affectionate relationship; and (3) sexual relations

Intimacy-conflict cycle (Feldman)

Intimacy skills

(1) confirmation

Exercise: Disconfirming triads (confirming, disconfirming, rejecting behaviors)

(2) self-disclosure

Definition-voluntary, sharing personal/private things, attempt to build relationship

Onion-layer model

Conditions: (a) dyadic, (b) reciprocal, (c) trust, and (d) incremental

Exercise: Real vs. ideal

(3) empathy — putting self in other's shoes

Exercise: Role reversal demonstration by leaders. (Participants are asked to try this alone.)

Closing: "Most Like an Arch" by John Ciardi

Saturday Afternoon 1:00-4:00

Intimacy skills (continued)

(4) sexuality: (a) monological, (b) socialization to sexuality, (c) family-of-origin attitudes toward sex, and (d) discussion between partners

(5) listening: (a) importance of recognition and (b) feedback characteristics of good listeners

Exercise: Reflective listening

(6) boundaries: (a) systems and subsystems boundaries, and (b) need for marital boundaries

Exercise: Real vs. ideal boundaries

"Mud on the Wall"

Family Communication Evening Series

Evening One

Definitions

Communication — process of sharing meanings (1) verbal vs. nonverbal, (2) horizontal vs. vertical, and (3) nurturing vs. functional

Family: (1) types (a) natural, (b) blended, (c) single-parent, and (d) extended and (2) system theory
Exercise: Satir system building

Family-of-origin: (1) individual influence, (2) ethnic influence, and (3) one major source of patterns

Communication rules: (1) *What* can you talk about? (2) *How* are you allowed to talk about it? and (3) *Who* can hear it?

Communication networks (card exercise): (1) chain, (2) switchboard, and (3) completely connected

Relational currencies
(1) Intimate: positive verbal statements; self-disclosure; listening; touch; affect display; sexuality; aggression
(2) Economic: money; gifts; favors; service; access

Wrap-up: Summary, closing reading, and questions

Evening Two

Intimacy: (1) deep, detailed knowledge and understanding (family), (2) loving, affectionate, personal relationships (family), and (3) sexual relations (marital)

Stages of relational development: (1) orientation, (2) exploratory affective exchange, (3) affective exchange, and (4) stable exchange

Self-disclosure

Risk-taking voluntary sharing of personal private information about self

Confirmation

Acceptance of another as he or she is
It is more confirming to be: (1) engaged in dialogue rather than monologue; (2) be accepted rather than interpreted; (3) treated personally rather than impersonally
Exercise: Disconfirming Triad

Sexuality

Monological vs. dialogical sex
Family-of-origin rules for discussing sex
Attitudes toward discussing sexuality
Summary, closing reading, and questions

Evening Three

- Conflict is (1) inevitable, (2) healthy, and (3) potentially constructive
- Intimacy — conflict cycle
  - (1) for nonproductive conflict
  - (2) circular model
  - (3) attempt to maintain comfortable distance/closeness
- Types of conflict: (1) covert and (2) overt
- Rules for constructive conflict:
  - Describe don't label
  - Don't gunnysack
  - Avoid red flag words
  - Negotiate time/place
  - Avoid historical clubs
  - Establish checkup times
- Reflective listening:
  - Importance of reflective listening
  - Demonstration of reflective listening
  - *Exercise:* Reflective listening for groups
- Summary, closing reading, and questions

Conclusion

The growth of the marriage and family enrichment movement, with its focus on communication, provides unique opportunities for speech-communication professionals to teach new, responsive audiences who have an immediate application for communication skills. Most speech-communication faculty never encounter a working system or group of committed, motivated members within the traditional classroom. The enrichment programs provide a chance to make a difference in others' lives and in your own life. Every time you direct a workshop you talk to yourself as well as to the participants. Every time you leave a workshop you know more about communication than before you started. It may well be the most rewarding teaching you have ever experienced.

Bibliography

Allen, R. R., and Kenneth L. Brown, eds. *Developing Communication Competence in Children.* Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook, 1976.

Bach, George, and Peter Wyden. *The Intimate Enemy.* New York: William Morrow, 1966.

Ball, J. "Strengthening Families Through Marriage Enrichment." In *Building Family Strengths: Blueprints for Action*, edited by N. Stinnett, B. Chesser, and J. DeFrain. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979.

Bosco, Antoinette. *Marriage Encounter, A Rediscovery of Love.* St. Meinrad, Ind.: Abbey, 1973.

Boyd, E., et al. "Teaching Interpersonal Communication to Troubled Families." *Family Process* 13 (1974): 317–36.

Buckland, C. M. "An Educational Model of Family Consultation." *Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling* 3 (1977): 49–56.

Carnes, Patrick. *Understanding Us.* Minneapolis: Interpersonal Communication Programs, 1981.

Clarke, Carl. *Guidebook for Conducting a Marriage Enrichment Weekend.* 2d ed. Atlanta, Ga.: Marriage Enrichment Workshops, 1972.

De Young, Alan. "Marriage Encounter: A Critical Examination." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 5 (1979): 27–32.

Doherty, William, and Mary Lester. "Casualties of Marriage Encounter Weekends." *Family Therapy News* 13 (1982): 4–9.

Doherty, William, Patricia McCabe, and Robert Ryder. "Marriage Encounter: A Critical Appraisal." *Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling* (1978): 99–106.

Elliot, S., and B. Saudners. "The Systems Marriage Enrichment Program: An Alternative Model Based on Systems Theory." *Family Relations* 31 (1982): 53–60.

Ellis, Titia. "The Marriage Enrichment Weekend: A Qualitative Study of a Particular Weekend Experience." Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1982.

Feldman, Larry. "Marital Conflict and Marital Intimacy: An Integrative Psychodynamic Behavioral Systemic Model." *Family Process* 18 (1979): 69–78.

Gallagher, C. *The Marriage Encounter: As I Have Loved You.* Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975.

Galvin, Kathleen. "An Analysis of Communication Instruction in Current Marital Interaction Programs." Paper delivered at Speech Communication Association, Minneapolis, November 4, 1978.

Galvin, Kathleen, and Bernard Brommel. *Family Communication: Cohesion and Change.* Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1981.

Garcia, Gabriel C. *Marriage Encounter.* From 1967 and 1969 editions of *Encuentro Conyugal.* Miami: Marriage Encounter, 1969.

Garland, D. R. *Couples Communication and Negotiation Skills.* New York: Family Service Association of America, 1978.

_____"Training Married Couples in Listening Skills: Effects on Behavior, Perpetual Accuracy, and Marital Adjustment." *Family Relations* 30 (1981): 297–306.

Garland, Diana. *Working with Couples for Marriage Enrichment.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983.

Genovese, R. J. "Marriage Encounter." In *Marriages and Families: Enrichment Through Communication,* edited by S. Miller. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1975.

Gilbert, S. J. "Self-disclosure, Intimacy and Communication in Families." *The Family Coordinator* 25 (1976): 197–215.

Gordon, T. *Parent Effectiveness Training.* New York: Wyden, 1970.

Gottman, J., D. Notaruis, J. Gonso, and H. Markman. *A Couple's Guide to Communication.* Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1976.

Gottman, J., and A. L. Porterfield. "Communicative Competence in the Nonverbal Behavior of Married Couples." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 42 (1981): 817–24.

Guerney, Bernard. *Relationship Enhancement: Skill Training Programs for Therapy, Problem Prevention and Enrichment.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Gurman, A. S., and D. P. Kniskern. "Enriching Research on Marital Enrichment Programs." *Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling* 3 (1977): 3–11.

Hicks, M., and M. Platt. "Marital Happiness and Stability: A Review of Research in the Sixties." In *A Decade of Family Research and Action: 1960–1966,* edited by C. Broderick. Minneapolis: National Council on Family Relations, 1971.

Hof, L., N. Epstein, and W. R. Miller. "Integrating Attitudinal and Behavioral Change in Marital Enrichment." *Family Relations* 29 (1980): 241–48.

Hof, Larry, and William R. Miller. "Marriage Enrichment." *Marriage and Family Review* 3 (1980): 1–27.

_____*Marriage Enrichment.* Bowie, Md.: Robert Brady Co., 1981.

Hopkins, L., et al. *Toward Better Marriages.* Winston-Salem: ACME, 1978.

Joanning, H. "The Long-Term Effects of the Couple Communication Program." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 8 (1982): 463–68.

Kahn, M. "Non-Verbal Communication and Marital Satisfaction." *Family Process* 9 (1970): 449–56.

Koch, T., and L. Koch. "Marriage Enrichment Courses: The Urgent Drive to Make Good Marriages Better." *Psychology Today* 10 (1976): 33–35, 83, 85, 95.

L'Abate, Luciano. "Skill Training Programs for Couples and Families." In *Handbook of Family Therapy*, edited by Alan Gurman and David Kniskern. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1981.

Lederer, William, and Don Jackson. *The Mirages of Marriage*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1968.

Lewis, J. M., et al. *No Single Thread: Psychological Health in Family Systems*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976.

Mace, David, and Vera Mace. "Marriage Enrichment — Wave of the Future?" *The Family Coordinator* 24 (1975): 131–35.

_____ *How to Have a Happy Marriage*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1977.

Miller, Sherod, ed. *Marriages and Families: Enrichment Through Communication*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1975.

Miller, Sherod, Raomon Corrales, and Daniel Wackman. "Recent Progress in Understanding and Facilitating Marital Communication." *The Family Coordinator* 24 (1975): 143–52.

Miller, Sherod, Elam Nunnually, and Daniel Wackman. *Alive and Aware: Improving Communication in Relationships*. Minneapolis: Interpersonal Communication Programs, 1976.

National Marriage Encounter. *Marriage Enrichment Resource Manual*. St. Paul, Minn.: National Marriage Encounter, 1978.

Navran, L. "Communication and Adjustment in Marriage." *Family Process* 6 (1967): 173–84.

Olson, D. J., et al. *Family Inventories*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1982.

Otto, Herbert. "Developing Human Family Potential." In *Building Family Strengths: Blueprints for Action*, edited by N. Stinnett, B. Chesser, and J. DeFrain. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1979.

_____ *Marriage and Family Enrichment: New Perspectives and Programs*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.

_____ "Marriage and Family Enrichment Programs in North America — Report and Analysis." *The Family Coordinator* 24 (1975): 137–42.

Pierce, R. M. "Training in Interpersonal Communication Skills with the Partners of Deteriorated Marriages." *The Family Coordinator* 22 (1973): 223–26.

Powell, Gleam, and Karen Wampler. "Marriage Enrichment Participants: Levels of Marital Satisfaction." *Family Relations* 31 (1982): 389–93.

Raush, H. L., et al. *Communication, Conflict, and Marriage: Explorations in the Theory and Study of Intimate Relationships.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974.

Regula, R. R. "The Marriage Encounter: What Makes It Work?" *The Family Coordinator* 24 (1975): 153–59.

Rollins, B. C., and H. Feldman. "Marital Satisfaction Over the Family Life Cycle." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 32 (1970): 20–28.

Satir, Virginia. *Peoplemaking.* Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books, 1972.

Smith, L., and A. Smith. "Developing a National Marriage Communication Lab Training Program." In *Marriage and Family Enrichment: New Perspectives and Programs,* edited by Herbert Otto. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.

Spanier, G. B., and R. A. Lewis. "Marital Quality: A Review of the Seventies." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 42 (1980): 825–39.

Stinnett, N., B. Chesser, and J. DeFrain, eds. *Building Family Strengths: Blueprints for Action.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979.

Wackman, Daniel. "Communication Training in Marriage and Family Living." Paper presented to Speech Communication Association, Minneapolis, November 4, 1978.

Wackman, Daniel, Sherod Miller, and Elam Nunnually. *Student Workbook: Increasing Awareness and Communication Skills.* Minneapolis: Interpersonal Communication Programs, 1976.

Wallerstein, Judith, and Juan Kelly. *Surviving the Breakup: How Children and Parents Cope with Divorce.* New York: Basic Books, 1980.

Walsh, Froma, ed. *Normal Family Processes.* New York: Guilford Press, 1982.

Wampler, Karen. "The Effectiveness of the Minnesota Couple Communication Program: A Review of Research." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 8 (1982): 345–55.

Wampler, K. S., and D. H. Sprenkle, "The Minnesota Couple Communication Program: A Follow-Up Study." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 42 (1980): 577–84.

Watzlawick, P., J. Beavin, and D. Jackson. *Pragmatics of Human Communication.* New York: Norton, 1967.

Wright, L., and L. L'Abate: "Four Approaches to Family Facilitation." *The Family Coordinator* 26 (1977): 176–81.